
**MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES
PROCEDURE MANUAL**

IS18-3.11 Correspondence Courses

October 8, 2016

Effective Date:

Signature on File

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I. PURPOSE: This procedure establishes guidelines governing utilization of correspondence courses by offenders.

A. **AUTHORITY:** Sections 217.040 and 217.175 RSMo

B. **APPLICABILITY:** Department staff members at any facility or institution under the jurisdiction of the division of adult institutions or the division of offender rehabilitative services. The chief administrative officer or designee of any facility housing offenders under the jurisdiction of the division of adult institutions or the division of offender rehabilitative services will develop standard operating procedures based on the guidelines established herein.

C. **SCOPE:** Nothing in this procedure is intended to give a protected liberty interest to any offender. This procedure is intended to guide staff member's actions.

II. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Chaplain:** An employee appointed by the director of human services to administer a program designed to meet the needs of a population which has different religious or spiritual beliefs. Chief administrative officers not allocated a chaplain shall assign these duties to a staff member or approved volunteer in corrections.

B. **Correspondence Courses:** Educational or religious instruction offered through the mail by colleges and universities, private schools, professional, career or technical and/or religious associations and government agencies utilizing a variety of media and written materials.

C. **Education Corrections Manager:** A staff member who is assigned to a department operated academic school or educational program and has the responsibility of the day-to-day operations, supervision and management of an academic school or educational program and staff members.

D. **Education Zone Manager:** An employee at the level of corrections band manager II, within the division of offender rehabilitative services, who is assigned to oversee the operations of academic schools and programs within the prison system.

E. **General Population:** All offenders except those assigned to diagnostic processing, reception and orientation processing, disciplinary segregation, administrative segregation or protective custody, offenders

with a mental health 5 initial classification analysis or reclassification analysis score, or any offender on a status that restricts them from general population privileges.

F. **Protective Custody:** Assigned segregation of an offender for the safety of himself.

G. **Staff Member:** Any person who is:

1. employed by the department on a classified or unclassified basis (permanent, temporary, part-time, hourly, per diem) and are paid by the State of Missouri's payroll system;
2. contracted to perform services on a recurring basis within a department facility (i.e., medical services, mental health services, education services, vocational services, substance abuse services, etc.) pursuant to a contractual agreement and has been issued a permanent department identification card;
3. a volunteer in corrections;
4. a student intern;
5. issued a permanent department identification card or special access in accordance with the department procedure regarding staff member identification.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. ACADEMIC CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. Any offender with an education level of E-1, assigned to general population or protective custody may request to take an academically oriented correspondence course.
- b. All courses must be from a school that has been approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education or one of the regional, national, professional or specialized accrediting agencies.

2. INSTITUTIONS WITH ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

- a. At institutions with academic schools, offenders will submit an application for correspondence course form to the education corrections manager.
- b. The education corrections manager will review the application for correspondence course form and determine whether the course content is appropriate.
 - (1) If the application is not approved, the education corrections manager will return the form within 5 working days to the offender with the reason for denial.
 - (2) If the application is approved, the education corrections manager should, within 5 working days, notify the offender and submit the form to the deputy warden for review.
- c. Within 5 working days the deputy warden will review the application to ensure that institutional order, safety or security are not adversely affected and advise the education corrections manager and the offender of the approval or the reason for denial on the completed application for correspondence course form.
- d. The education corrections manager will file the form in the academic education file in accordance with institutional services procedures regarding education files.

- e. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be established to ensure the offender's progress on the correspondence course is monitored by the education corrections manager at the school.

3. INSTITUTIONS WITHOUT ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

- a. At institutions without academic schools, offenders will submit an application for correspondence course form to the education zone manager at central office.
- b. The education zone manager will review the application for correspondence course form and determine whether the course content is appropriate.
 - (1) If the application is not approved, the education zone manager will return the form within 5 working days to the offender with the reason for denial.
 - (2) If the application is approved, the education zone manager should, within 5 working days, notify the offender and submit the form to the applicable deputy warden for review.
- c. Within 5 working days the deputy warden will review the application to ensure that institutional order, safety or security is not adversely affected and advise the education zone manager and the offender of the approval or the reason for denial on the completed application for correspondence course form.
- d. The education zone manager will file the form in the academic education file in accordance with institutional services procedures regarding education files.
- e. The deputy warden or designee will advise the education zone manager when the offender doesn't complete the course, fails, or withdraws.

B. RELIGIOUS CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. Any offender may request to take a religious correspondence course by submitting an application for correspondence course form to the chaplain.

2. APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. The chaplain will review the application and determine, in consultation with educational staff members, whether the course content level is appropriate relative to the offender's education level if that level is below E-1.
 - (1) If the application is not approved, within 5 working days the chaplain should return the form to the offender with the reason for denial.
 - (2) If the application is approved, within 5 working days the chaplain should notify the offender and submit the form to the applicable deputy warden for review.
- b. Within 5 working days the deputy warden will review the application to ensure that institutional order, safety or security is not adversely affected, and will advise the chaplain and the offender of the approval or the reason for denial on the completed application for correspondence course form.
- c. The chaplain will maintain the application for correspondence course form.

C. EXPENSES AND OFFENDER PROPERTY

1. The offender or offender's family will be responsible for all costs associated with enrollment, coursework, testing, postage, etc.
2. SOP will address the approval process for payment by the family.
3. The cost of the courses must be paid in full prior to the offender beginning the course.
4. Unit staff members will process orders and payments by the offender for course materials in accordance with SOP.
5. All items received will be processed in accordance with institutional services procedures regarding property and control.
 - a. The name of the educational or religious institution must be visible on the outside of the package.
 - b. SOP will:
 - (1) specify how the materials are examined and reviewed by the education corrections manager or chaplain to ensure the materials are relevant to the course outline or synopsis, and
 - (2) specify how materials are handled when rejected by the education corrections manager or chaplain.
6. Possession and retention of approved materials for offender courses will be in accordance with institutional services procedures regarding offender property and control.
7. Completed course materials, including any CDs, videos or DVDs, will be removed from the institution at the offender's expense in accordance with institutional services procedures regarding property and control.

D. TESTING

1. The education corrections manager, chaplain, or designee will ensure testing required by the correspondence courses is provided, including:
 - a. ensuring the person proctoring the educational or religious degree course test has at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university,
 - b. locating and securing a testing room, and
 - c. ensuring the return mail of the test and answer sheets to the educational or religious institution.

IV. REFERENCES:

- A. 931-4751 Application for Correspondence Course
- B. IS7-1.7 Education Files
- C. IS22-1.1 Offender Property and Control Procedures

V. HISTORY: Previously addressed under Division Rule 123.010 Inmate Education and Vocational Training. Original Effective Date of April 30, 1991, no revisions.

- A. Original Effective Date: April 30, 1991
- B. Reposition Date: December 13, 1999
(Retained IS14-2.8 Effective Date of April 30, 1991)
- C. Revised Effective Date: July 25, 2000

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- D. Revised Effective Date: November 30, 2008
 - E. Revised Effective Date: June 4, 2009
 - F. Revised Effective Date: July 11, 2015
 - G. Revised Effective Date: December 12, 2015
 - H. Revised Effective Date: October 8, 2016